REMARKS

The Office Action dated July 27, 2007 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 12, 16 and 24 are amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the present invention. Claims 2, 3, 14 and 15 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the amendments is found at least in the cancelled claims. New claim 25 is added. No new matter is added. Claims 1, 4-13, and 16-25 are respectfully submitted for consideration.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over US Patent No. 6,577,622 to Schuster et al. (Schuster), in view of US Patent No. 6,870916 to Henrikson et al. (Henrikson). The Office Action took the position that Schuster disclosed all of the features of these claims except allocating a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call and transmitting a second message comprising the network address identifying the resource capable of sustaining the conference call. The Office Action asserted that Henrikson disclosed this feature. The rejections of claims 2, 3, 14 and 15 are moot in light of the cancellation of these claims. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references, taken individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in any of the pending claims.

Claim 1, from which claims 4-11 depend, is directed to a method. A first message comprising a request for a resource capable of sustaining a conference call is transmitted

from a first terminal to a conference server. The first terminal receives from the server a second message comprising the network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call which has been allocated to the server. The first terminal transmits to at least one other terminal a third message comprising the network address. Connections are initiated from the first terminal and the other terminal to the network address to establish a conference call between the first terminal and the other terminal. The conferencing resources are administered in a communications system which includes a plurality of terminals and the conference server.

Claim 12, from which claims 13 and 16-23 depend, is directed to a communications system comprising a plurality of terminals and a conference server. A receiver unit is configured to receive from a first terminal a first message comprising a request for a resource capable of sustaining a conference call. An allocation unit is configured to allocate a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call. A transmission unit is configured to transmit to the first terminal a second message comprising the network address that identifies the resource capable of sustaining the conference call which has been allocated by the server. The first terminal is configured to transmit to at least one other terminal a third message comprising the network address. The first terminal and the other terminal are configured to initiate connections to the network address to establish a conference call between the first terminal and the other terminal.

Claim 24 is directed to a communications system comprising a plurality of terminals and a conference server. A receiving means receives from a first terminal a first

message comprising a request for a resource capable of sustaining a conference call. An allocation means allocates a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call. A transmitting means transmits to the first terminal a second message comprising the network address that identifies the resource capable of sustaining the conference call which has been allocated by the server. The first terminal is configured to transmit to at least one other terminal a third message comprising the network address. The first terminal and the said other terminal are configured to initiate connections to the network address to establish a conference call between the first terminal and the said other terminal. The conference server administers conferencing resources in a communications system.

According to embodiments of the presently claimed invention, when a user of a first terminal wishes to make a conference call to a number of other terminals, the user of the first terminal transmits a request for a resource capable of sustaining a conference call to a conference server which allocates a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call and transmits the allocated network address identifying the resource for the conference call to the first terminal. When the user of the first terminal wishes to make the conference call the network address can be sent from the first terminal to the other terminals which the user of the first terminal wishes to make a conference call with. All the terminals can then connect to the allocated network address of the resource capable of sustaining the conference call to establish the conference call.

The above described arrangement is advantageous in that it allows the user of the first terminal to obtain an allocated work address of a resource for a conference call. The

user of the first terminal is then in control of this information and can determine when to send it to other terminals for setting up a conference call and which terminals to send it too. The decision as to who to send it to can be made by the user at the first terminal immediately prior to sending the allocated address to the other terminals. Applicants respectfully submit that each of the above claims recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested in any of the cited references.

As discussed in previous correspondence, Schuster is directed to a system and a method for using a portable information device. Schuster describes a number of examples of methods by which conference calls can be set up between three users. Schuster discloses three different embodiments, only one of which utilizes a conference server. This embodiment is illustrated in Fig. 10a and described at col. 22, line 41 – col. 23, line 16. According to the arrangement described and illustrated therein, a first terminal transmits an invite request to a conference server. The invite request instructs the conference server to transmit invite requests to other terminals for the conference call. The other terminals accept the invite by transmitting an ok message to the conference server. Data channels are then created between the terminals and the conference server. No data channels are created between any of the terminals. This is because the conference server has data channels to all the terminals participating in the conference call. This is clearly and expressly disclosed in the description of Schuster at column 22, line 41 - column 23, line 16.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest at least the features of "transmitting from the first terminal to at least one other terminal a third message comprising the network address", "initiating connections from the first terminal and the said other terminal to the network address to establish a conference call between the first terminal and the other terminal," as recited in claims 1, 12, and 24. The Office Action relied on Schuster to disclose this feature in its rejections of claims 2, 3, 14 and 15.

The Office Action on page 4 stated that "Schuster discloses a method further comprising transmitting from the first terminal to at least one other terminal a third message comprising the network address (i.e., through the conference server, the first terminal transmits to the other terminals an invite message inherently comprising of the network address) (see Figs. 10a-10b, and column 22, lines 42-61)". However, Applicants submit that the "invite message" referred to in the Office Action is merely the initial invite message sent from the first terminal to the conference server, and is not a "further third message," as recited in the pending claims. Furthermore, the message referred to in the Office Action is not sent to the other terminals "through" the conference server as alleged by in the Office Action. Instead, the cited portion of the Office Action specifically states that the invite request instructs the conference server to transmit invite requests to the second and third data network telephones. As such, no "further third message comprising the network address of allocated resources for a conference call" is sent from "the first terminal to at least one other terminal specified" as recited in the present claims.

The arrangement according to embodiments of the present invention is such that all the data required to initiate the conference call is sent in the first invite message from the first terminal to the conference server and the conference server then sets up the conference call by setting up channels to the various terminals. In contrast to the arrangement described in Schuster, the presently claimed invention allocates a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call and transmits this address to the user at the first terminal such that when the user at the first terminal wishes to initiate the conference call the allocated network address can be sent from the first terminal to other terminals which the user of the first terminal wishes to involve in the conference call. All the terminals can then connect to the network address to establish the conference call. As such, the user of the first terminal can obtain allocated resources for a conference call first and then immediately prior to making the conference call the user can decide who to send the allocated address to. This is advantageous in situations where it is not decided who will participate in the conference call until just prior to the conference call but where it is known in advance that a conference call will be made and that allocated resources for the conference call are desired. Applicants respectfully submit that Henrikson fails to cure these deficiencies.

As discussed in previous correspondence, Hendrickson is directed to a multimedia communications system and conferencing arrangements. Specifically, Henrickson describes a system in which a conference establishment server receives from a first user a request for a conference, the request including details of the required conference such as participants, resources and rules. According to the arrangement described in Henrikson, a

user of a first terminal sends a request to a conference establishment server including all information necessary for the conference call, preferably including a list of participants, an indication of resources desired for the call, and rules for the conference call. The conference establishment server determines resources for the conference call and availability of participants and subsequently reserves resources for the conference call. When a time for the conference call occurs, the server can initiate the conference call by establishing calls to the participants or alternatively, the participants can call into a conference bridge.

Applicants respectfully submit that not only does Henrikson fail to cure the significant deficiencies of Schuster discussed above, the problem with the arrangement described in Henrikson is that the user at the first terminal does not have any control over who is requested to participate in the conference call after sending the initial invite request to the server. This does not reflect a common situation in which a user of a first terminal will know that resources are required for a conference call but will not know exactly who is to participate in the conference call until just prior to the conference call. Thus, Henrikson fails to cure the deficiencies of Schuster.

Thus, in light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently claimed invention in which a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining a conference call is allocated and transmitted to a user of a first terminal and wherein the user of the first terminal can then transmit the allocated network address to other terminals such that all the terminals can connect to the network address to establish a conference call is advantageous over the arrangements described in the cited references.

Applicants respectfully submit that because claims 4-11, 13 and 16-23 depend from claims 1 and 12, these claims are allowable at least for the same reasons as claims 1 and 12, as well as for the additional features recited in these dependent claims.

Based at least on the above, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claims 1, 4-13 and 16-24. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is respectfully requested.

As stated above, new claim 25 is added. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 25 recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested in any of the cited references.

Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 1, 4-13, and 16-25 is condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that each of claims 1, 4-13, and 16-25 be allowed, and this application passed to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, the applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Brown
Registration No. 51,091

Customer No. 32294
SQUIRE, SANDERS & DEMPSEY LLP
14TH Floor
8000 Towers Crescent Drive
Tysons Corner, Virginia 22182-2700
Telephone: 703-720-7800
Fax: 703-720-7802

DEB/cqc

Enclosures: Fee Transmittal
RCE Transmittal
Check No. 017353